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# **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Investigative Report Released for February's Fatal Police Pursuit in Montgomery County**

**BALTIMORE, MD (October 25, 2022)** – The Independent Investigations Division (IID) of the Office of Attorney General today released its investigative report of the February 26, 2022, fatal police pursuit in Montgomery County.

On February 26, at approximately 1:30 a.m., Montgomery County Police Department Officer Antonio Copeland observed a silver Honda Accord commit traffic violations including speeding in the area of Rockville Pike and Nicholson Lane in North Bethesda. Officer Copeland conducted a traffic stop on the car, and while he was standing next to the Honda, the driver, Noraly Paz Chavez, drove away. Officer Copeland returned to his car and pursued the Honda. During the pursuit, Ms. Paz Chavez crashed in the 3600 block of Randolph Road in Wheaton. She was pronounced dead on the scene. The passenger, an adult male, was taken to a local hospital with minor injuries and was treated and released. No other vehicles were involved in the crash.

The IID concluded its investigation on September 13, 2022, and forwarded its investigative report to the Howard County State's Attorney's Office on September 14. The Montgomery County State's Attorney and the Howard County State's Attorney have an agreement to review officer-involved civilian fatalities in each other's jurisdictions. The Howard County State's Attorney's Office notified the IID on October 6 of its decision not to prosecute this case.

The IID's report contains detailed investigative findings and an analysis of relevant legal issues. Because the state's attorney—not the IID—retains prosecution authority in this case, the report does not make any recommendations as to whether any individual should or should not be charged. A copy of the investigative report can be found [here](#).

By law, the IID's report must remain confidential until any related prosecution is completed or the State's Attorney's Office declines to prosecute. If the local State's Attorney decides to prosecute the matter, the IID will release the report, with appropriate redactions for confidentiality, within 30 days of a final judgment of all defendants in the case. If the local State's Attorney declines to prosecute, the IID will release the report, with appropriate redactions for confidentiality, within 30 days of that determination.

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2022/102522.pdf>